

Tilburg University

Review: Trabalhos em Curso. Etnografia de operários portugueses da construção civil em Espanha

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Published in:
Construction Labour Research News (CLR News)

Publication date:
2017

Document Version
Publisher's PDF, also known as Version of record

[Link to publication in Tilburg University Research Portal](#)

Citation for published version (APA):
Cremers, J. (2017). Review: Trabalhos em Curso. Etnografia de operários portugueses da construção civil em Espanha: Work in Progress. Ethnography of Portuguese workers in construction in Spain. *Construction Labour Research News (CLR News)*, 2016(4), 43-44.

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Reviews

John Queirós & Bruno Monteiro (editors): **Trabalhos em Curso. Etnografia de operários portugueses da construção civil em Espanha** (Work in Progress. Ethnography of Portuguese workers in construction in Spain), ISBN: 978-989-8701-25-1, 140 p. Le Monde Diplomatique/Deriva Editores, Porto.¹

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In recent decennia, thousands of Portuguese workers were weekly commuting to Spain, the neighbouring country, in search of labour. Many of them worked in the construction sector. This book reproduces part of the results of an investigation into this phenomenon carried out under the project 'Recent dynamics of emigration movements in the Portuguese Northwest: the case of construction workers', funded by the Directorate-General for Consular Affairs and Portuguese Communities and headquartered at the Institute of Sociology of the University of Porto. A related article of Bruno Monteiro, one of the authors, was already published in CLR-News 2-2014: Portuguese construction workers in Spain: situated practices and transnational connections in the European field of construction (2003-2013). In our 'from the editor' in 2014 we commented that this work provides a 'glimpse into the work and time pressure to which migrant workers are exposed. The contributions also illustrate their motives and the struggle to survive'.

This is certainly also true for the contributions in this book that presents findings resulting from ethnographic research conducted by the editors between 2008 and 2013. The contributions shed a light on different aspects of the living and working conditions of Portuguese construction workers from the Sousa Valley in their workplaces in Galicia. Workers often commuted on a weekly or fortnightly basis between their residence in Portugal and the building sites in Spain, above all in Galicia, Madrid and the Basque regions. Their

1. The book was presented during a seminar at the Porto University on 5 December 2016: <http://derivadaspalavras.blogspot.nl/search/label/Bruno%20Monteiro>

working conditions were hard, with permanent time pressure and long working hours, huge safety risks and poor lodging. Notorious are also the many accidents on the way to and from work.

After the collapse of the construction sector in Spain, as a consequence of the financial crisis, the annual influx of Portuguese workers to Spain, which peaked with more than 70,000 workers on building sites in 2007, fell massively, with a particular impact on the construction workforce. From 2007 on, the exodus came to a standstill with a devastating effect on working lives and the standard of living. Included are interviews with workers, employers and Portuguese and Spanish trade union leaders. Other contributions (by Jorge Arroteia, Lorenzo López Trigal, Ana Cristina Pereira) complement the volume with contributions on the situation at home.

Ernst-Ludwig
Laux / IG BAU

Bsirske, Busch, Höbel, Knerler, Scholz: **Gewerkschaften in der Eurokrise - Nationaler Anpassungsdruck und europäische Strategien.** (Trade Unions in the Euro-Crisis – national pressure for adaptation and European strategies) By , VSA-Verlag, Hamburg 2016, 240 pp., EUR 19.80, ISBN 978-3-89965-681-7.

Though the Euro-crisis has already been dominating the socio-political discussion for some years, this book, which is very much worth reading as it presents the effects of the financial crisis on trade unions, has only recently been published by VSA-Verlag. Active trade unionists and scientists have collected the results of common conferences and seminars and published them with subsidies from Hans-Böckler- and Friedrich-Ebert-Foundations. Based on country reports from Great Britain, Austria, France, Spain, Italy, Poland, Slovenia, and Lithuania, the effects of the crisis are summed up in the general chapters of the book.